

sinon le memorial qu'une generation
 mortelle se dresse
 anxieusement a elle-meme pour prolonger
 sa pensee
 caduque par un sepulchre aussi caduc que sa
 pensee? Au
 contraire, devant les eaux, le ciel, les
 montagnes on se
 sent devant des etres acheves et toujours
 jeunes?'

Indeed, one of the worst effects on the
 artist of thus
 renouncing the world and the flesh is that it
 leads, as its
 corollary, to the exaltation of Art into a
 religion. The
 religion of Art is a superstition. Certainly it
 does little
 good to Art or artists. Stendhal was
 doubtless wilfully
 exaggerating when he attributed the
 excellence of French
 literature in the seventeenth century to the
 fact that the
 seventeenth century had no great esteem
 for literature.
 But this is at least saner than perching the
 Muses, as the
 only true Immortals, on the topmost peak
 of Olympus,
 and pretending that the only angels are
 those that can be
 made to dance on the point of a pen. Such
 distorted
 theology leads in turn to distorted ethics in
 which the
 artist becomes the one righteous man in a
 wicked world;
 and it is not good for anyone to start
 fancying himself the
 one righteous man in a wicked world.
 Flaubert sometimes
 falls into this moral tone: 'Il me semble en
 ma conscience
 que j'accomplis un devoir, que j'obeis a une
 fatalit 6
 superieure, que je fais le bien, que je suis
 dans la justice/
 It is strange that one who kept moralising so
 inflexibly

out of his novels should have thus dragged
it into the
process of creating them. True, he was far
too honest and
too sceptical to cling to such an attitude; in
other moods
he will grow as cynical about Art as about
everything
else. Probably, after all, it is only *une
immense blague',
'un ulcere que je gratte'. He envies the
scientist. He is sick
of the very name of *Madame Bovary*. He
compares him-
self to Monsieur Binet in that novel, turning
out infinite
serviette-rings to kill time; None the less,
Art remained